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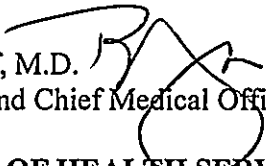
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through leadership,
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April 17, 2006

TO: Each Supervisor

FROM: Bruce A. Chernof, M.D. 
Acting Director and Chief Medical Officer

SUBJECT: **DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH SERVICES (DHS)
HOMELESS PATIENT DISCHARGES**

This is to provide you with the first quarterly update on activities related to the discharge of homeless patients from DHS hospitals. In addition, this will serve to update you on follow-up activities related to my April 3, 2006 correspondence regarding concerns raised by Union Rescue Mission (URM) about patients being released from area hospitals and allegedly inappropriately transported to Skid Row.

In the correspondence dated February 28, 2006, the Department committed to the following:

- 1) Work with the Department of Public Social Services (DPSS) to implement a pilot project out-stationing eligibility workers at DHS Hospitals if the Board approved this recommendation in the Homeless Prevention Initiative, and
- 2) Develop and implement a standardized policy within all of DHS inpatient facilities by July 1, 2006, that will outline the expected discharge planning activities to be conducted on behalf of homeless or unstably housed patients.

DPSS Eligibility Workers at DHS Medical Centers

DHS had a preliminary planning meeting with DPSS to outline the steps required to implement the out-stationing of DPSS eligibility workers at DHS Hospitals to take General Relief, CalWORKS, and Food Stamp applications. Since your Board has approved this strategy at the April 4, 2006 Board Meeting, the Department will continue to work with DPSS to ensure an effective implementation process and are planning for a start date of July 1, 2006.

Policies for Patient Discharges

DHS is developing a comprehensive standardized discharge policy for all inpatient facilities that will outline the expected discharge planning activities to be conducted on behalf of homeless or unstably housed patients.

The internal workgroup responsible for this effort utilized the 'Clinical Standards and Implementation Guidelines for the Discharging of LA County Department's Homeless or Unstably Housed Consumers' which were developed by the discharge work group convened by the CAO Service Integration Branch (SIB). The Department plans to implement these new policies on July 1, 2006.

Alleged Patient Drop-Offs to Skid Row

As referenced in my April 3, 2006 correspondence regarding alleged patient drop-offs to Skid Row, Libby Boyce, DHS Homeless Services Coordinator, met with Andy Bales, the President of Union Rescue Mission (URM) to discuss the results of our internal review of patients that were transported to URM after being discharged from a DHS hospital. During that meeting, Mr. Bales acknowledged that all patients, allegedly inappropriately dropped-off at URM from a DHS facility, were actually appropriately referred. Mr. Bales clarified that the "Patient Dumping Data Form" utilized by URM, was provided to URM by the City Attorney's office and that URM staff was not utilizing the form correctly, which Mr. Bales plans to address via staff training. In addition, Mr. Bales stated that he will discuss with the City Attorney's office his concerns that the "Patient Dumping Data Form," does not capture adequate/accurate detail regarding patient drop-offs. Mr. Bales reported that URM is developing its own form to track both drop-offs that were pre-arranged and those that were not pre-arranged. Mr. Bales agreed to contact Ms. Boyce should there be any future drop-offs from a DHS facility that are of concern to URM.

If you have any questions or need additional information, please let me know.

BAC:lb

c: Chief Administrative Officer
County Counsel
Executive Officer, Board of Supervisors
Sheriff
Director of Public Social Services
Director of Mental Health
Director of Children and Family Services
Director of Community and Senior Services